

131
THE
JESUITE

IN
MASQUERADE:

OR THE
Sheriffs Case Uncas'd.

In some Brief
OBSERVATIONS

Upon the Danger of taking

OATHS

Otherwise than according to the plain
and Literal Meaning of the IMPOSERS.

*Published to Prevent Perjury and Damnation of the mis-
guided Takers, and Ruine, War, and Desolation, which
by this Doctrine may fall upon the English Nation.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. Mearne, 1681.

THE
JOURNAL

MASSACHUSETTS

OF THE

Sherrill's Case

to some Brief

OBSERVATIONS

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Printed by J. W. Moore, 1851.

T H E
Jesuite in Masquerade:
 O R,
The Sheriffs Case Uncas'd, &c.

IT is very observable that *Calvin* and *Loyola* were Contemporaries, and much about the same time that the first Erected the *Geneva Consistory*, the other Founded the Society of the **JESUITES**; and I think without breach of Charity, considering it is to be justified by apparent matter of Fact, one may say too truly of both, as *Thuanus* of the Jesuites Society,

*Nata Magistratum convellere, nata ministris
 Subtrahere obsequium, Praesulibusque suum.*

Their joynt design is to pull down
 The Priest, the Prelate, and the Crown.

How instrumental the Disguised Jesuite was in the Contriving and Executing the last Tragedy of this Island, is averred by the Testimony of a person from whom the Dissenters pretend, that to differ, or disbelieve his Evidence, is a Crime next to Capital: and yet all the art of man, and all the arguments that have been used to persuade them, they still act by the very same Principles of the Jesuites, do no more affect them than if they were idle Tales, and in nothing does the Witchcraft of Rebellion appear more potent than in the charms it gives to mens Consciences, whereby they become wholly invulnerable, and not to be touched with the most pointed truths.

There is nothing so sacred in Humane Society as a solemn Oath; this is the foundation of Leagues and Commerce, the end of Strife, and the cement of Friendships, the Bond of Subjects Allegiance, and the security of the Sovereigns Government, Remove once this antient Landmark, and Humane Society is dissolved; for there can be no Faith, no Trust, where Oaths become weak, suspected, or not regarded: Jealousies and eternal Suspicions will like Vultures gnaw the Soul of the Prince, and like Serpents, lodge in the bosoms of the People, divorce their Affections, distract their Counsels, divide their Interests, and introduce all the miseries and mischiefs which attend a broken and disjoynted State.

For corrupting this Fountain of Honor and Honesty, Truth and Justice, and prostituting the reputation of Religion, while they make it only a Pandar to Lust, Interest and Ambition, the Jesuites are most deservedly infamous, and by all sober men even of the Romish Religion, esteemed the Pests of Christendom, hated and detested as Renegades from Truth.

And what is the Jesuites Crime in this particular, but undoing the credit and esteem of Solemn and Sacred Oaths, while they teach the Doctrines of Evasions, Equivocations and Mental Reservations, to be lawful; by which means they may take any Oaths, swallow any Tests, outwardly protest one thing, and yet mean another, even directly contrary.

Should any person have charged this Guilt upon Protestant Dissenters, and those who would be thought the best of them, guides of the Blind, instructors of the Ignorant, and the very salt of the Earth, he would find as little credit with their misled Profelytes, as if he should charge them with Mahometanism or Heathenish Idolatry. But *Ex ore tuū, Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.* And if I make it plain that these blind Guides are leading their blinder Disciples into the Ditch of Popery, and the deepest of it Jesuitism, to the overthrowing of Society, and, not only the Protestant, but all true Religion, I hope it may be a means to reclaim many from their pernicious ways, and if the charity of the design shall fail in rescuing them from perdition, yet it will return into my own bosom, and I shall thereby both satisfy my own conscience, and deliver my soul from being accessory by a sinful silence to their eternal ruine. We are obliged to them for the clear discovery of this their Jesuitical Doctrine, in a sheet of Paper, Printed the last year about the time of Election of Sheriffs for London and Middlesex; and no person taking notice of it, they have upon the same occasion Reprinted and Published that Paper, with such Evasions, as, if allowed for sound Doctrine, will enable all persons, Papists, Dissenters, or whatever enemies the Government may have, to take any Oaths, and yet avoid the Obligations of them.

The Paper is called *The Sheriffs Case*, and the design of it is, not only to persuade the Candidates for the Office of Sheriffs for London and Middlesex, but all other Dissenters from the Church of England, that they may lawfully capacitate themselves for all Offices of Aldermen, Sheriffs, &c. by taking the Oath for the Regulating of Corporations; for so the Question is stated in the Title.

I suppose them Non-conforming Ministers by their talking of Edifying, and indeed they have edified us exceedingly; for having laid it down as a Rule, that an Oath is to be taken in the sense of the Lawgiver, the Margin corrects this truth, and informs you that to this Rule there is a double extreme: the first is, of those who think it is to be taken literally, and this they tell you is too rigid; for then we shall strain at all Oaths. The second, is of those, who if they can frame any interpretation of it that is but reasonable, think they may take the words in that sense and be satisfied: and this they say is so loose, that nothing can be imposed but we shall swallow it. This I desire the Reader to take particular notice of, in regard it is the perfect Doctrine of the Jesuites; and though here disclaimed by these Jesuites in Disguise, yet you shall see the whole drift of the Paper, is to quit the too rigid literal sense of the Oath, and fix upon it an interpretation, and mere Jesuitical Diabolical Evasion, by the help of which they may take any thing that is imposed.

There is nothing more undoubted than that all framers of Oaths to be imposed by Law, design they should be taken in the literal sense and no other; and unless this be granted, all Oaths are vain and useless: for if the Oath doth plainly express the sense of the Compilers and Legislators in its words and letters, which certainly must be their intention, then according to these mens assertion the literal sense is the will of the Lawgivers, and so it is to be taken they confess: and to say it has any other meaning, or is capable of any other interpretation than the plain literal common meaning of the words, is to accuse the Legislators of folly, as not knowing how to express their sense without ambiguity, and to render the Oath, by reason of its ambiguity and doubtful sense, unlawful to be taken in *Veritate, Judicio & Justitiā*, in Truth, Judgment, and Righteousness, which no doubtful Oath can be, and at best to render it useless, by leaving it to the interpretation of the Taker, whose sense (though he believes it to be the sense of the Lawgivers, which they make the true *medium* between the former extremes) may be far different, if it follows not the letter of the Oath, from the sense of the Imposers.

What the sense of the Legislators was in imposing this Oath, and that they intended it should be taken in the plain and literal meaning of the words will be evident both from the Proem of the Act, and from the reason of imposing it. The Proem or Preamble of the Act runs thus, *And to the end that the Succession in such Corporations may be most probably perpetuated in the hands of persons well affected to his Majesty and the Established Government, it being too well known, that notwithstanding all his Majesties Endeavours, and unparallel'd Indulgence in pardoning all that is past, nevertheless many evil spirits are still working; wherefore for prevention of the like mischief for the time to come, and for preservation of the Publick Peace both in Church and State, Be it Enacted, &c.*

Now

Now the History will explain this, and the matter of Fact informs us, of the reason of this Act of Parliament, which was a precaution, for the Peace of the Nation, and the Established Government in Church and State. There were a sort of People, of whom it is very probable the Authors of this Paper might be some, who having entered into a solemn League and Covenant without and against the consent of the King, for the extirpation of Popery; did under that notion abolish Episcopacy and the Established Church, and thereby ruin a third Estate of the Kingdom, as the Bishops are proved to be, by the Author of the Grand Question, and others beyond all answering; these men, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists and other Sectaries, after they had entered into this unlawful (as this Paper confesses it) Combination, raised an Army, seized the Kings Forts, Ships, Magazines, and made War against their Sovereign; and to take off the Odium of downright Rebellion, they by the help of the Jesuits received an odd traiterous Position of the *Spencers* condemned in two Parliaments, That a defensive War was lawful, and that they fought not against the Kings Authority, but his will Counsellors, and by distinguishing between the Office and the Person of the King, they made it lawful to fight against his Person; pretending that at the same time that his Person was at *Kinton, Naseby, or Oxford*, his Authority was with the two Houses of Parliament; and thus by first dividing his Subjects from him, their Duty and Allegiance, and then dividing his Authority from his Person, they so far prevailed, that at the last by the most execrable Murder that ever the Sun saw, except that from which he hid his face by a miraculous Eclipse, they divided his Head from his Body; overturn'd the whole Frame and Constitution of the Government, banished the King that now is, (whom God preserve) brought in Arbitrary power, and Established a Commonwealth or Free-State, as they were pleased to call the most horrid Slavery that ever the generous *English* groaned under.

But the Nation growing weary of their insupportable Tyranny, and their ambition breaking the Tyrants into Factions, Providence miraculously restored to us our Gracious Sovereign, and with him our ancient Laws, Liberties and Religion; and his Majesty, the most merciful Prince that ever wore the *British* Diadem, with an unexampled clemency, even beyond the hopes of the Criminals, many of which had withdrawn themselves into Foreign parts, was graciously pleased by a General Act of Oblivion to pardon all who had been in actual Rebellion against him and his Royal Father, and restore them to all their Lives, Liberties, Estates, Charters, Immunities and Franchises which they had forfeited to the Justice of the Law; nor were any excepted from this extensive mercy besides the Murderers of his Father.

Had not these Dissenting Sectaries been the most ingrateful Race of men in the whole World, or were they capable of being obliged, to much goodness, and the warm Sunshine of Royal Bounty would have obliged them to throw off the Cloak of Maliciousness, and have rendered them the most dutiful and loving Subjects, for according to our Saviours Rule, *They to whom much is forgiven, one would think, should love much*, but so far were they from the least propensities of good Nature and Ingenuity, *That like the Dog they returned to their Vomit, and like the Sow that was washed to their wallowing in the Mire*; and having got the security of a Pardon, they began to act over again and repeat their former Guilt, and who so busie as the Discontented evil Spirits the Sectaries, to poison the minds of his Majesties Subjects with false Principles, Fears and Jealousies, the Original and Source of the late Rebellion, and to alienate the affections of the People from their natural Liege-Lord and Sovereign.

The King and Parliament observing this, did in their Wisdom endeavour to obviate the growing mischief; and knowing the dangerous influence the disloyalty of Corporations, whose Representatives compose the more numerous part of the House of Commons might have upon the publick Peace, did in their Wisdom provide this Law to prevent mischief for the time to come, by keeping the Government of Corporations successively in such hands, as might be of different Principles from these Dissenters; Friends to his Majesty, and the Established Government in Church and State; and in plain English; to Exclude all such as thought themselves under any obligation from that wicked Covenant, or that it was lawful upon any pretence whatever to take up Arms against the King; That is, to keep out all Dissenters, whose Principles these were, and whose Practices had been suitable, from any share in the Government of Corporations; and to discriminate such Sectaries, as avoid the Communion of the

Established Religion, from others who own and embrace it, and its Principles of Loyalty, by this Test or Oath, the plain literal meaning of which obviates the Principles of Factions and Dissenters.

Now come your Protestant Jesuites, and tell their Credulous Disciples, whom they have made Enemies to the Established Religion under the notion of Popery, as they did before, and it is to be suspected by their seditious Libels, are no friends either to his Majesty and the Monarchy, or Established Government; these men of Dispersation tell them, *True it is, the Design of the Act was to keep you out of places of Trust in Corporations, but there is a necessity that now you should get in, for say they, page 4. It is of great concern at this time, that such man-bold Sheriffs who are willing to deny their own advantage for the sake of the publique, and it is yet of greater concern, that by the publishing our grounds for their justification, many in distress about the Oxford Act may be relieved, and a way opened for many of the like substantial Citizens of known Piety, Loyalty and ability to be brought into Corporations throughout the Nation, to the great service of the King and Kingdom. This very Speech betrays them to be Galileans, for the good of the King and Kingdom was all the pretence of the late Rebels, of whom it is to be supposed these are some reliques; all they did was for the good of the King and Kingdom, they took the Protestation, the Covenant, Associated, Rebelled, raised Taxes, Plundered, Murdered all that they could, that opposed them, and even the King himself at last, for the good of the King and Kingdom; and these men of Piety and Loyalty who are in such distress about the Oxford Act, who are to be brought into Corporations for the service of the King and Kingdom: who are they but the very persons whom the King and Parliament, the Wisdom of the Nation, for the preservation of publique Peace, and the safety of the Government, thought necessary by these Acts to be kept out of Corporations?*

Such who it may be have not been at Church this 15, 16 or 20 years, who are made believe by these their Teachers, That to joyn with the Congregations in Common-Prayer is unlawful, that to kneel at the Sacrament is Idolatry, that the Common-Prayer is nothing but the Mass in disguise, that Bishops are Antichristian, and Lord Bishops intolerable; that the Reformation is imperfect; that the Government is set to introduce Popery; that it walks the streets in C-Stock and Circingles as that illiterate Fellow Care has in one of his Abelling Paquets, *That those who go to Church are Church-Papists, that there is reason and necessity to repeal all Penal Laws against Dissenters, and particularly those about Corporations; and intends to endeavour to get such a House of Commons by their getting these men of known Piety and Loyalty into Corporations, as may so far as they can rescind or abate the severity of the Laws against Dissenters.* So that it is clear that the Design of the King and Parliament, and of these Matters of Faculties and Dispensations, are directly opposite; for the Kings and Parliaments intention was by this Oath and Abrenunciation of the Covenant, to keep these men of Dissenting Piety and Loyalty out of Corporations; theirs is, in spite of Law and Conscience to bring them in; now, whether the King and Parliament who were for keeping them out, or these Fellows, who before helped to subvert the Government, and have once been pardoned for it, and are for bringing them in, are best Judges what is best for the service of the King and Kingdom, I think needs no determination.

Well! but in they must come, into Corporations throughout the Nation, though it be against the Will of the King, and the Intention of the Law; these great Dictators say it is for the great service of the King and Kingdom, and their little Popeships are infallible; and because there is no coming in without taking the Oaths, and no taking them in the strict and literal sense, out comes a Dispensation from these men of Authority to relieve the many in distress about the Corporation Acts.

I do verily believe these men have not taken these Oaths themselves, and I do further believe they think them unlawful, they confess it in the literal sense, p. 4. and though their Sheet comes out with a *Nemine Contradictante*, that is only as the Pope grants Dispensations to others to take Oaths, which he thinks unlawful and would not take himself.

But pray let us see how they handle the matter to make the Oath go down.

The first clause of the Oath there is no difficulty in say they, for any objection may be answered by this little Parenthesis, *s. A. B. Do swear that I hold it unlawful to take up Arms against the King (or his Rightful Government) upon any pretence to bat-*

tebet. Was there ever such a violation of a Sacred Oath, and an Interpretation of it

so remote from the meaning of the Legislators? have these men either Sense or Conscience? The Oath is positive, as words can make it, that it is unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King. Ay say Mr. Interpreters, That is true; but *Sub-intelligitur* by the King (or his Rightful Government) that is, you may swear to a contradiction, and yet swear true: you may swear that you hold it unlawful, to take up Arms against the King upon any pretence whatsoever, and at the same time, that you believe it is lawful to take up Arms against him, under pretence that his Government is not Rightful, so that you swear with a direct contradiction against all pretences, and yet with a Reservation of one pretence, and such an Evasion, as no persons who had been pardoned for one Rebellion would have made; but they who intend by this to shelter their Consciences, and prepare them for a second.

Why, pray who shall judge of his Rightful Government? or does not this Oath oblige all that have taken it absolutely, are they not perjured if upon any pretence whatsoever they take up Arms against the King? Is not saying they meant his Rightful Government a pretence, a mere Evasion and contradiction to the sense of the Oath? are not the words *any* and *whatsoever* such Universals, as exclude all exceptions and limitations, all interpretations, and even that of your *Rightful Government*.

To reduce the matter into Fact, we will suppose one of these men of Piety and Loyalty at the head of a Company, or Regiment, for the great service of the King and Kingdom, to endeavour by force of Arms to extirpate Popery and Reform the Church and State: come I to him, and with all becoming humility, represent to him the danger of Perjury: Sir, You have taken a solemn Oath, calling the God of Heaven and Earth to witness, that you did believe it unlawful to take up Arms against the King upon any pretence whatsoever, and yet now you are in actual Arms against his Majesty, how will you escape Damnation? to which he replies in some scornful Indignation, *Fellow, I am not to be instructed by you, I am now in Arms to pull down the Whore of Babylon that man of Sin, to set up the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and what I swore I am now about to perform, for I swore that it was unlawful to take up Arms against the King upon any pretence whatsoever, the King, that is his Rightful Government; but the King would have us Governed by Bishops, and that is not Rightful, but Antichristian Government, so that I take not up Arms against the King, but for him and his Rightful Government.*

Thus by swearing according to the Interpretation of this Jesuitical Dispensation, and avoiding the literal sense of the Oath, a man may without perjury by the help of this Evasion act directly contrary to the Tenour and Intention of the Oath and the Legislators, who imposed it, to secure the Government in Church and State against the attempts of any persons under any pretence whatsoever, who should for the time to come take up Arms against the Kings and allow but this liberty of Interpreting Oaths, and saying you verily believe this is the meaning of the Legislators, and an Oath will signify just what the taker pleases, and that is just nothing: Thus shall a Papist take all the Oaths and Tests intended to secure the Government against Popery, and yet never break them, though he endeavours to introduce that Religion; for by this Rule not swearing according to the literal meaning, which is too rigid, but according to that Interpretation which he believes is the sense of the Law-givers, when he swears Allegiance or Supremacy to the King, that is his Rightful Government. And if this be not pulling down the Walls of our Troy, to let in the Wooden Horse with his belly full of Priests and Jesuites, I cannot tell what is; and the Government is certainly infinitely obliged to these Protestant Jesuites for dismantling its Fortifications, and taking away the Obligation of Oaths; and thereby the possibility of distinguishing Friends from Enemies; for by this changing of Armour with the Jesuites, both may enter secure and surprize the Town: 'Tis but as 'tis sworn they have done, putting on the disguise of Protestant-Dissenters, and the business is done.

*Mutemus Clypeus, Danaumque insignia nobis
Aptemus. Doluit an virtus quis in hoste requirat?*

Let's with Dissenters change our Shield
By craft (what skill't) we'll win the Field.

In the Margin they put two Cases, the first of a Prince attempting a Virgin's Chastity is frivolous, the other of supposing a Prince designs to ruine his Country, or alienate his Kingdom, they answer in this Case, they are not to return Violence upon his Person for all that, and as for his Officers, Followers, or Armies, the solution follows in the next clause. The last Rebels fought not against the King in his Politick, but his personal capacity, and so by their Doctrine, when they cut off the Head of *Charles Stuart*, they never hurt the King. But now the Sand, the quick-sand of Rebellion is shifted to the other side of the Channel, and there's no Violence to be offered to the Kings person: Oh! that all of a suddain is become Sacred and Invulnerable with them, but then his Authority must go to wrack: so that a King, as they have divided him, must one half of him be sure to suffer. And I pray when you have disarm'd him of his Authority, what is a King but a Noble Pageant? once take away *Jupiter's Thunder*, and his Altars will find as few Sacrifices, as his Temples Worshipers; *What's the word of a King is, there is power*, that is, Authority is an inseparable and incommunicable prerogative of Sovereignty, but our Dissenters are wiser than *Solomon*, and can take away power, and yet leave the King safe and sound, this Doctrine like lightning melts the Sword and leaves him only the Scabbard of Authority, for pray what is the meaning of the solution of the second clause?

And I do abhor, (That is disown or disclaim) that Traiterous Position, of taking Arms by his Authority against his person, or against any Commissioned by him. That is, say they, legally Commissioned by him in the legal pursuit of such Commissions.

Observe pray, first here is a Parenthesis upon the word *Abhor*, Oh! 'tis a sad thing to be an *Abborrer*, a man may suffer Martyrdom in Effigie upon *Queen Elizabeth's* day for being an *Abborrer*; but pray why so soft words as your Parenthesis of disown and disclaim? may not that which a man wears is Treason be *Abhorred*? Why such favour to a Traiterous Position, that it must only be disown'd and disclaim'd? Oh dear old acquaintance which has done them such service! if it must fall let it fall gently! *requiescant molliter ossa*, the bones of the good old cause must be gently treated. But the poison of the Arrow lies here, in the Interpretation, legally Commissioned, and legal pursuit of such Commissions; for here is a Sally-port for Rebellion to enter at, when the Government had as 'twas thought and intended barricaded all the Gates and Avenues against it. This is indeed such a Jesuitical Evasion and Reservation upon the Oath, that I do not wonder to hear them thank God the most scrupulous man may resolutely take this Oath; for I dare say, even *Oliver Cromwell* might safely with this limitation set up for Sheriff or Alderman and take the Oath.

For, says *Oliver*, Look you Gentlemen, I have been as great a Villain as any of you in my Generation, but the King has pardoned me, and I have a mind to be at the old Trade of Protector again; which I must first do by getting into an Office that may influence, assist and encourage my Party; the truth is, here is a rigid Oath, which if I do not take I must be kept out, and if I take it in the rigid literal sense, that I *Abhor* the traitorous Position, &c. I must be perjur'd and damn'd; but d'ye mark the Gentlemen, there is a medium between the two extremes, and I believe the meaning of the Legislators was this, (though the rigid literal sense seems to contradict it, and to deal plainly with you will not serve our purpose) that to *Abhor* taking up Arms against the King, or any Commissioned by him is only meant such as are legally Commissioned by him in the legal pursuit of such Commissions, but pray observe me, if the King intends to ruine the Countrey by these Guards which are so illegally kept up and Commissioned by him, the Law-givers never intended to set up Arbitrary power by this Oath, and therefore if I take up Arms against his Officers, Followers, or Armies, who are not legally Commissioned by him, nor do legally pursue such Commissions, the Oath does not at all restrain me and you, my fellow Souldiers, to defend our Lives, Liberties, Property, and the true Protestant Religion against them: as for the King (and here methinks I see him clap his hand upon his breast) God forbid I should return Violence to his person, no, I have sworn that I hold it unlawful to take up Arms against the King, (that is his Rightful Government) upon any pretence whatsoever; But here are a Company of rude indigent younger Brothers, Pensioners, Popishly-affected-Tories, Malqueraders, who being encouraged by the tantivy *Jure Divinitus*, the Lawn Sleeves, Cassock and Circingles, would set up Arbitrary Government and the

the Common-prayer that abominable Porridge. Now, Gentlemen fellow Souldiers, though you and I have all sworn we disown and disclaim (for I cannot say *Abhor*) that traitorous Position of taking Arms by his Majesties Authority against his person, or any Commissioned by him in pursuit of such Commissions, which Oath I thank God I had no such scruples about, as some of your Chicken-conscience fellows have, but took it resolvedly, in this sense, and that was the sense of the Legislators, as I verily believe, that it was only meant of such as are legally Commissioned, and in legal pursuit of these Commissions. But as I said before, these Commissions are illegal and illegally pursued to introduce Arbitrary Power and Popery, and therefore, against these Officers, Followers, and Armies of the King, you may and must fight lawfully, and 'tis no Rebellion nor Perjury, but for the great Service of the King and Kingdom.

Thus is this excellent intention of securing the publick Peace and safety of the Government; and preventing Rebellion for the time to come under any pretences whatsoever, which was the intention of the Oath, entirely defeated, by a little Jesuites Powder given by the Dissenting Doctors, who will cure the most agued Conscience of all its hot and cold fits, quakings and shiverings at Perjury and Damnation, by two or three Parenthesis, of *Rightful Government*, instead of the rigid literal word *King*, and *legally Commissioned in the legal pursuit of such Commissions*, instead of *any Commissioned, in pursuit of such Commissions*.

And, I pray what Government can be safe or secure if solemn and sacred Oaths, calling God to witness between them for the truth and sincerity of their intentions, may be thus easily evaded, and mens consciences scared with this red hot iron against the horrid sin of Perjury?

There is no Oath but at this rate the greatest Villains may take it, and yet pursue his Villany, the greatest Rebel may swear it, and yet persist either obstinately in actual or secretly in the intentional design of Rebellion.

I would gladly now be informed how it is possible for the Government either to extirpate Popery or secure us against it. We have long laboured under the difficulty of the Jesuites slipping their necks out of the Collar of the Laws by Equivocations, Mental Reservations and Evasions; but their Dissenting Brethren have given the finishing stroke to the work, and have, by this case, brought swearing to that perfection, that a man may swear to palpable Contradictions without scruple, or remorse of Conscience, or danger of Perjury.

You have heard *Oliver* harangue in the Language and by the Principles of these Dissenters: Now shall you hear *Ned Coleman*, by the help of these grains of allowance from the Consistory, out-do his Declaration, and prove himself a true Protestant, and that he intends to keep out Popery; yet when he is resolved to bring it in, *True it is*, says *Ned*, *that there is a Pestsilent Heresie which has long domineered over these Northern parts of the world which is to be subdued, and the Roman Catholick Apostolick Religion to be Established. Now this I can never hope to effect, unless I can serve my self in, to be Secretary of State; but this I must not hope to do without taking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and the Test against Transubstantiation: Should I take them in the literal sense, that is too rigid, or put any interpretation upon them that I please, that is too loose: but here is a middle way between these two extremes; for I verily believe the sense and meaning of the Law-givers was to secure the true Religion and Worship of Almighty God by those Oaths, and in that sense I thank God I can without scruple swear that I believe the King to be Supreme Governor, and that no Forein Power has any Jurisdiction over the King, that is, his Rightful Government, which ought to be under the Pope: That there is no Transubstantiation in the Sacrament; for there being no Priests among the Hereticks, there can be no Transubstantiation: that is, I swear, all these as they are intended to secure the True Religion: For certainly the Law-givers could have no other intention; and it is absurd to think they had. They and I indeed differ a little about the point of True Religion; as they and the Dissenters also do; but that is but a trifle, and we agree in the main, that True Religion is to be secured, maintained, propagated and defended: And though I must take the Corporation Oaths, yet if we can but get an Army of Catholicks into the Field, we will not take up Arms or Fight against the King, that is, his rightful Government, or against those Legally Commissioned by him, but only against those pestilent Hereticks who are Illegally Commissioned, and Illegally pursue those Commissions to destroy the True Religion of the Holy Catholick Apostolick Roman See. And then for altering the Religion, we will never attempt that, but by the Legal Authority of Parlia-*

ment, which when we have overcome the Heretics, we will call to dispossess these Heretical Bishops, Deans, and Chapters, and bestow them upon the Catholics: and sure we cannot fail in the Design, having so great a Party even among the Dissenters, who though they may be do not mean exactly the same with us, yet agree in Esteeming these Bishops Antichristian and Unlawful: and will lend us a hand to the pulling them down as they did before. However if we can but set these Heretics together by the ears, we have a Noble Hero within a mile of an Oak, who may step over the Ditch, and when both Parties have worried themselves almost to death, may part the fray by conquering both.

Have not these Interpreters now think you span a fine thread on't? will not these effects of eluding Oaths, bolstering Consciences, relieving Distresses of their many Loyal and Pious men, conduce much to the service of the King and Kingdom, the peace and safety of the Church and State.

The short of the matter is this, we see it daily in their Prints, in their Discourse, in their Actions, the Wisdom of the Nation, the King with the Advice and Consent of his Parliament, by these Oaths intended to support the Government by Monarchy in the State, and the Hierarchy in the Church, and to prevent their Ruine by a second Rebellion, and by excluding men of Dissenting Principles from any Power in Corporations, thereby to keep them out of Parliaments, and to prevent even that way the attempts of altering the Established Frame and Constitution of the Government by King, Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons; and that by the very literal sense of these Oaths.

Now come our great Governors and Guiders of Conscience, and teach their Disciples a way to elude the meaning of these Oaths, and thereby to get into Corporations; from thence to get into the House of Commons, and there to endeavour those alterations they think fit and necessary; and if they can get a Party strong enough, and wicked enough to take the Field, to avoid the imputation of Rebellion, and the force of the Oath which they have sworn, that they hold it unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever to take up Arms against the King &c. by these Evasions and Interpretations.

Thus are men taught to swear direct contradictions; for, saith the Swearer, I hold it unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever, and yet I hold it lawful upon pretence that I fight not against his Rightful Government. I abhor or disown, &c. taking up Arms against those Commissioned by the King in the legal pursuit of those Commissions; but I do not abhor or disown Fighting against those that are illegally Commissioned by him, i. e. the Guards, or those who are illegally pursuing those Commissions. I swear that I will not endeavour any alteration of the Government in Church or State, that is, as I am a private man; but I will as I am a private man get into an Office in a Corporation in order to be chosen into the House of Commons, to endeavour the Repeal of all Statutes against Dissenters, and these rigid Corporation Oaths, to help forward the great work of Reformation, by purging the House of Lords of the Bishops, the dead weight, and the Church of this Popish Service-Book.

Having thus level'd the way, the disgorging of the Covenant is easie; and indeed the Obligation of that Oath expires shortly; and 'twas thought few who had taken it, if any, could be alive at the 23 of March 1682, but to a wonder many are and are like to be. God giving them a long time of Repentance, I wish they may make better use of it than hitherto they have done; and since they have in their high and mighty judgment in their Paper condemned that Combination as unlawful, I give my suffrage to their sentence.

There are several other things by the by which are crowded into this sheet of Paper of malicious influence upon the Government.

As first, that by Parliament they mean one Corporation of Kings, Lord and Commons, which is to make the King only one of the three Estates, and from thence to infer a co-ordinacy of Power. Now that this is directly contrary to Law and Reason is most evident: First the Law makes three Estates in Parliament, whereof the King is the Head, as may be seen at large in the *Grand Question*, and other Books, and particularly in the Statute or Act of Parliament held at Westminster the 23 of Jan. 1 Rich. 3. where the three Estates are expressly, with a, that is to say, declared to be the Lords Spiritual, Temporal, and Commons. Secondly, it is against Reason, for the Parliament, that is, the three Estates may be dissolved, that is, cease to be at all, or to have any Authority, and be reduced to their private condition: and if the King be one of the

the three Estates, he must be dissolved as well as the other two : and let them have a care of teaching this for Law or Gospel, for fear of High Treason. Nay their Predecessors were either more knowing or more honest in this point : for if you had demanded of them, who they fought for, they would have told you, for King and Parliament ; which had they been one Corporation, as they fancy, was non-sense ; for it was only for the Parliament, the King being only a part of it, and one of the three Estates.

Secondly, To shew us what they would be at, that it is lawful upon some pretence to take up Arms against the King, they bring in *David* by the head and shoulders, and tell us he was actually in Arms to defend himself against *Saul's* Forces, which is directly giving the lie to the Holy Ghost in the plain matter of Fact ; for he never made the least resistance, but fled from place to place out of his Native Country, hid himself in Woods and Caves, and Rocks : and when *Saul* hunted him as a Partridge upon the Mountains, never offered by force to attempt any thing against him, or his Forces ; but it was very unlucky their telling us how his heart smote him for cutting off the skirt of *Saul's* garment ; from whence we may be informed of the difference of the temper, between their hearts and *David's*, whose Consciences, never yet smote them for cutting off one Kings Head, and another Kings Crown from his Head, which went a little higher than the Skirts.

Thirdly, their instance of *Rahab* and the Spies, is of most dangerous consequence, as they draw this inference from it, that no body can be engaged any farther by an Oath than what he agrees to, in the taking it ; where he declares beforehand he will not be bound, he is free. Which is such a latitude, and playing fast and loose with Oaths, and juggling with God and Man, as that no Oath can be of any value, or lay any obligation upon the Conscience more than the taker pleases.

Lastly, Observe in their reasons for Printing this Paper, to take the Oath and subscribe the Declaration in the literal strict construction, appears in our judgment unlawful, say they, and yet it is plain that the Imposers meant the literal sense : but the Oath must be taken to serve a turn, and a sense must be found out to justify the taking, and make it appear lawful : So that a man may for *Ragione di stato*, take what they in their judgment think is unlawful in the literal sense, and by construction make it lawful to serve a turn. If the Pope and Conclave, and all the Jesuites in the world can find out a more damnable Doctrine to elude the force and Obligation of Oaths than this, or any other person, *Eri mihi magnus Apollo*.

I have only one thing to add to the serious consideration of all sober, loyal and conscientious Protestants, that besides the infinite danger which must attend all Humane Societies, which can no longer be safe or secure, if Oaths, the most sacred of all ties and obligations, may at this rate be eluded and evaded, and the sense of the Law-givers perverted and contradicted, Perjury will be so common and familiar, that it will pass for Piety, and the whole Nation will fall under the danger of Gods severest Judgments ; and while there will be no difference between him that sweareth, and him that feareth an Oath, we must expect, and particularly those persons who, encouraged by this Doctrine, venture to take these Oaths, to fall within the reach of *Zechariah's* flying Roll, *Zech. 5. 4.* of which God saith, *I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and of him that sweareth falsely by my name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, and the timber thereof and the stones thereof.* It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire, and the dreadful avenger of Perjury, which certainly is one of the greatest affronts that can be offered to the Divine Majesty of the God of Truth.

If this may in any measure contribute towards the preventing those mischiefs and miseries, which the teaching this damnable Doctrine threaten to bring upon the Peace of the Nation, the Established Government, and the Souls of the mis-informed, I shall esteem it a great happiness to have been instrumental in so great, so good a work ; but if God, for our sins, has designed us for sufferings, *liberavi animam meam.* I have shewed you, from the watch-tower of truth, that the Sword is coming, I have sounded the Trumpet, if any man perish, his blood will be upon his own head.